NSTU Rejects Request to Avoid Teacher Lay-offs

Department of Education

News Releases

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The Nova Scotia Teachers Union has rejected a request from the government to extend the deadline for issuing teacher lay-off notices.

Earlier this week, the government presented teachers with options to retire early, work part time or take leaves of absence. The options are designed to prevent layoffs related to the provincial budget.

The department wanted the union to agree to extend the May 15 deadline by one month. This would give school boards time to re-work their budgets based on the government's plan, and remove 400 teaching positions from the system without layoffs. The extra time would also enable teachers to consider the options, without the needless stress of receiving lay-off notices.

"You have to wonder where the teachers' union is coming from," Education Minister Jane Purves said. "Why would they want this unnecessary stress placed on their members?"

The four options for teacher work force adjustment presented by the government are voluntary, cost-neutral, and yield salary savings. They are expected to appeal to many, many teachers.

"The union must understand, there will be change. We want to work through this change by talking, by co-operating, by doing things like extending the lay-off deadline to ease the change for teachers," explained Ms. Purves. "Despite the union's objections, we will protect teachers against lay-offs as a result of this budget."

Under the first option, a teacher could work part-time for two years, while continuing full-time pension contributions to protect the future. With the second option, the teacher could work part time with a reduced pension, then after two years retire with full pension.

A third option provides teachers, 50 and over, the opportunity to retire with a pension adjustment. Option four allows a teacher, two years short of retirement, to take a leave of absence with a full pension for the teacher at retirement.

Teachers will receive additional information on these options shortly.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union has rejected a request to extend the deadline for issuing teacher lay-off notices.

Education Minister Jane Purves says her department asked the union to agree to extend the May 15th deadline so teachers could consider four options designed to prevent lay-offs.

She says the union refused the request.

The options are: work part time with a reduced pension for two years and then get a full pension, work part time for two years while continuing with full-time pension contributions, retire with a pension adjustment for those teachers 50 and older, or take a leave of absence with full pension at retirement for those teachers two years short of retirement.

Purves says despite the union's objections, the government will protect teachers against lay-offs as a result of the budget.

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